

Exploring beliefs, celebrating diversity

Newham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education Primary Schools

Summary

Religious Education (RE) is part of the curriculum that all schools must provide for pupils 4 - 18.

In contrast to other subjects in the curriculum, where there are national programmes of study, the programme for RE in each Local Authority (LA) is locally agreed. The document in which each LA sets out the RE programme for its schools is called a 'local agreed syllabus for religious education'.

In Newham, the local agreed syllabus must be followed by all community and foundation schools. Faith-based schools have their own separate RE programmes.

The title of the Newham local agreed syllabus is 'Exploring Beliefs, Celebrating Diversity'. It is called this because RE gives children and young people the opportunity to:

1. learn about religion and world views
2. express and communicate ideas about religion and world views
3. gain and deploy skills needed for the study of religion and world views.

RE also provides an opportunity for children and young people to understand each others beliefs, practices and ways of life.

RE makes a valuable contribution to the personal development of children and young people, particularly their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development.

RE makes a contribution to the development of all children and young people, regardless of whether they come from a religious family background or not. In the rare case that parents or carers do not want their child to take part in RE, they have the right to withdraw their child.

Alongside all other aspects of school life, RE should make a contribution to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.



- In order to provide challenge and to identify the progress that children and young people make in RE, the agreed syllabus suggests that, when appropriate, 'steps to progress' are used to chart progress in each of three areas of the subject:

1. Learning about religion and world views
2. Expressing and communicating ideas about religion and world views
3. Gaining and deploying skills needed for the study of religion and world views.

RE in primary schools:

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (ages 3 to 5), the agreed syllabus suggests that the school experience of young children includes a range of RE-related activities that follow three themes:

- celebrating special times
- stories and what they tell us
- aspects of identity and relationships.

At Key Stage 1 (ages 5 - 7), the agreed syllabus requires that schools 'reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions presented in Great Britain' (The Education Act 1996).

This agreed syllabus expects schools as a minimum to provide opportunities for pupils to be taught about Christianity, at least one other principal religion, a religious community with a significant local presence and where appropriate a secular world view.

In year 1 the big question is 'What does it mean to belong?', investigating the relation between religion and

belonging throughout the year. In year 2 it is 'Can stories change people?', investigating the relationship between religious stories and action. There are 12 support units written by practicing teachers in Newham that schools can use to support RE teaching in their school.

At Key Stage 2 (ages 7 - 11), the agreed syllabus requires that schools include six RE units in each year. This agreed syllabus expects schools as a minimum to provide opportunities for pupils to be taught about Christianity, at least one other principal religion, a religious community with a significant local presence and where appropriate a secular world view.

In year 3 the big question is 'How are symbols and sayings important in religion?', investigating the relationship between religion and symbols. In year 4 the big question is 'What is special to me and the people in my community?', investigating the relationship between religion and our neighbourhood.

In Year 5 the big question is 'How do beliefs influence actions?', investigating the relationship between beliefs and actions. In Year 6 'How important are the similarities and differences between and within religions?', investigating the relationship between secular and religious world views.

There are 24 support units written by practicing teachers in Newham that schools can use to support RE teaching in their school.

If you have any questions about RE at your child's school then please do get in contact with the schools RE leader.

